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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY East Germany

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SUBJECT East German Attempts to Improve High Vacuum Tube Production

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25X1A

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SOURCE

In view of the fact that certain special materials (particularly special metallurgical alloys) have to be imported by East Germany from non-Communist countries for the production of high-vacuum tubes, the East German Government has decided to improve the equipment and the technological conditions at the VEB Halbleitwerk Auerhammer enterprise to such a degree that this plant will be able to produce these critical materials and thus make East Germany independent of imports from the West. At the same time, cooperation between the Auerhammer Werke and the Hettstedt rolling mill is to be organized as soon as the latter factory is returned to the East German economy or SAG-Marten. The Hettstedt enterprise, according to these plans, is to furnish special materials to Auerhammer for processing. The decision to develop Halbleitwerk Auerhammer into a special enterprise for the high-vacuum industry, or, as it was unofficially stated, into an East German Heraeus enterprise <sup>1/</sup>, was established in a decree of the Council of Ministers on 9 September 1953.

In the strength of the decree of the Council of Ministers, the State Planning Commission made available, in October 1953, investment funds for the purchase of special equipment needed for the conversion of the Auerhammer plant. The 1954 Investment Plan for Auerhammer provides for the import of a high-vacuum furnace from Switzerland and of a roller grinding machine from West Germany. If a roller grinder machine cannot be imported from West Germany, an attempt will be made to construct one in East Germany. A plan to import a roller grinder machine from Czechoslovakia was abandoned after the Auerhammer management and technologists of the enterprise rejected this plan, on the grounds that roller grinder machines made in Czechoslovakia are of such poor quality that they cannot satisfy Auerhammer's requirements. The roller grinder machine now in the Hettstedt plant cannot be used by Auerhammer, because it is now operating at peak capacity.

In the past, attempts have been made to manufacture some of the materials needed for the high-vacuum industry at Auerhammer. These attempts have been unsuccessful so far. In early November 1953, VEB Funkwerk Erfurt rejected and returned to Auerhammer 105.6 kilograms of pure nickel band made from

25X1A

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25X1A

-2-



Aue electrolytical nickel 0.15 millimeters thick and 150 millimeters wide. Chemical analysis revealed that the calcium, cobalt, copper, magnesium, manganese, iron and silicon contents were too high. When annealed in hydrogen for 30 minutes at 800 centigrades, the band showed a strong coating.

4. In November 1953, it was decided that specialists from the Hettstedt plant should be sent to Auerhammer as soon as they are available in order to train personnel there.

25X1A

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Comment.

This refers to the Heraeus Vakuumschmelze firm in Hanau, West Germany.

-2-

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